



**Montgomery Moving Forward  
Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget  
County Council Testimony  
Early Care and Education (ECE)  
April 16, 2020**

Thank you for your strong and thoughtful leadership during this time of crisis for our community.

Montgomery Moving Forward (MMF) believes a strong ECE system is needed now more than ever. Moving closer to a true system will be a key to the county's recovery from the economic consequences of this public health crisis.

As a result, MMF asks the Council to support the enhanced funding of \$1.4 million and a total appropriation of \$10.4 million for the Early Education and Education Initiative (ECEI).

Additionally, *now* is the time to act to stand up a coordinating entity—to leverage this funding, and propel forward a true ECE system. This crisis has exposed more clearly the silos and the gaps in the provision of ECE. A coordinating entity can lead the way in an ECE recovery effort to support ECE workers, providers, families and employers.

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**Why a coordinating entity? Moreover, why now?**

Montgomery County needs a public-private coordinating entity for ECE to bring the disparate parts of ECE together to leverage existing resources (including funds, time, and talents), break down silos, and effectively and continuously seek to close gaps in a strategic, systemic, and equitable way. This would be the entity's mission.

The goal is to foster the recovery of an industry sector in crisis, build a true system of care and learning from birth to age five in an effort to protect the workforce of today, and build the homegrown talent of tomorrow.

The short and medium term tasks of the entity would be to lead in efforts to help the ECE workforce, ECE businesses, and families seeking ECE resources and relief in light of the current COVID-19 crisis.

The ongoing and long-term key tasks of the entity would be:

- Breakdown silos and initiate efforts to build an efficient and effective ECE system
- Convene cross-sector public and private sector leadership board
- Identify and advance strategic priorities through joint advocacy
- Continuously map and seek to align the programmatic and fiscal array of ECE initiatives.
- Coordinate public awareness including education campaigns and convenings regarding best practices, return on investment, child development, and available resources from all sectors.
- Pursue pooled funding opportunities for public and private sector dollars to maximize investment, streamline efforts, and advance alignment.

### **What would the entity look like?**

The entity should be an independent organization with appropriate staffing to carry out an agreed upon mission and goals. An existing organization with the appropriate direction, guidance and agreed upon mission and goals from both public and private stakeholders and decision-makers can be retooled to serve as the new ECE entity. Staff would be guided by oversight from a public /private board made up of appropriate stakeholders countywide—from employers, providers, nonprofits, to parents as well as the array of organizations that positively affect the life of the child.

### **Please act now!**

You know an ECE system is crucial to the long-term health of our local economy. It is also crucial to the county's timely recovery from this public health crisis.

- Please appropriate the \$10.4 million in funds for ECEI despite the uncertain revenue picture.
- Please act now to initiate a coordinating entity that can lead the ECE recovery—lead efforts to help the ECE workforce, ECE businesses, and families seeking ECE resources.

Thank you again for your leadership during this difficult time for our community.

Montgomery Moving Forward Co-Chairs:

Kevin Beverly, President & CEO, Social & Scientific Systems, Inc.

Mike Knapp, President & CEO Skillsmart, Inc.

Susan Madden, Chief Government Relations Officer, Montgomery College

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